

LOCAL MEN HELP RUN FRENCH ROAD

Trainmaster of Rock Island Lines
Gets Letter From Former Em-
ploye of System.

TELLS OF DIFFICULTY IN WORK

Old Style Engines Handicap But
Americans Handle a Large Ton-
nage With Few Motors.

A letter was received this morning by M. E. Lucas, trainmaster of the Rock Island lines at Thirty-first street, from Sergeant William F. Burke, with Company B, Thirtieth railway engineers, of the American expeditionary force. He and others from this city are in the same company.

Sergeant Burke was formerly with the Rock Island road in this city and was very well known here. In his letter he mentions that all of the members of his company are well and he gives a good description of the French railway systems.

His letter in part is as follows: "Everyone in the company is in fine shape with the exception of possibly one or two suffering with a cold. As for myself, I am fine and dandy and I hope this letter will find you the same. You no doubt have seen by the papers that we took over a very important piece of track and glad to say that we are handling it very successfully, considering the material that we have to do with.

"The engines, while in pretty good shape, were built in 1885, while one old fellow I see was built in 1854. So you see they are old timers. Some have a Monitor injector while others have another make. There are no two engines alike. The lubricators won't work in half of them, and you have got to break the connectors and oil them that way. So you see we are in some difficulty in that way. As for steam some are pretty good while others are punk. All have a copper fire box and the lighter you fire them the better the results, as the grates are immovable. You have to hook the fire and pull the sticks out with a shovel.

"For fuel they use a brick about 8 by 4 by 4, compressed. This brick is made of slack held together by the use of tar or creosote. So you see from that you can get a fine hot fire. Along with this brick they use slack, as coal is a thing that must be used sparingly over here. One of our greatest troubles is that the men fire too heavy, which results in the steam going back on them, due to a dead fire underneath. You can not crowd the furnaces too much as you have not got with shaker bar to shake the grates with.

"Then the next disadvantage, which is a large one, is the braking power. On a hospital train they use a compound like our 1000 and about the same size. The trains are equipped with air and steam heat throughout. The hospital cars are about as large as our 400 class coaches and have

Westinghouse brakes. These trains are easily handled. But on the freight trains you have got to have the brakemen on the job as some engines are equipped with air on drivers only and the freiboy has got to watch the brakes on the tank and the three, four or sometimes five, according to the length of the train, brakemen have got to use the hand brake. These brakes do not work like ours with the chain. They are a screw affair and if they are set too hard they will slide the wheels, which might cause the car to slip off. So you have got to watch this point very close.

"For the engines that have not got air brakes, they have a brake known as a water brake. This works down through the cylinders. The water rushes into the cylinders, instead of steam, and makes a cushion, which naturally keeps the piston from working and finally you come to a stop.

"But along with bad air brakes and hand couplers and etc., we are the talk of France, due to the tonnage. We have been handling more tonnage with less power than the French ever did. No I am not responsible for this as they do not use any chief dispatchers over here. As I said before, I do not know who is responsible for the tonnage, but from the way our men beat an engine and the way the French do, I feel that it is due to the engineer hooking them back and then beating the stick off. You can hear them back for a mile.

"The cars have a capacity of 10 and some 12 so you can see it takes a good many cars to make eight hundred of a thousand tons. Where the French handled six or seven thousand tons with five engines we are handling eight or nine thousand with three engines. Not so bad, eh?

"They handle them a great deal differently than we do and the signals are different. Our highball is their stop and vice versa. Our whistle off signal is their calling air brakes and our short engine blast whistle is their whistling off signal. To start a train at a station, the chief de gare, (station master in America), blows a little horn when he is ready for them to go. The conductor blows a whistle and the engineer blows the engine whistle once. After that performance the train is ready to start.

"In all we have a very fine road, much better than I expected. The weather over here has been pretty bum for the last month. We have a good deal of rain along with foggy weather and sometimes it gets pretty cold. But in spite of these conditions the boys are happy and very contented."

YANKEE CHRISTMAS MAIL SAFELY OVER

A French Port—A special ship carrying 20,000 sacks of Christmas mail for the American troops arrived yesterday from the United States. The army postoffice has 50 special freight cars and an extra heavy detail of men here to handle the mail, which will be rushed to 20 branch postoffices, whence it will be distributed on or before Christmas day.

Another steamer arrived on Monday with 4,500 sacks of army mail, comprising for the most part Christmas presents.

All the news all the time—The Argus

SOUVENIR HUNTER AMONG SOLDIERS

Trenches Develop Passion for Collect-
ing Mementoes of Great War—
German Helmet Favorite.

Behind the British lines in France—
(Correspondence of the Associated
Press.)—In every battalion at the
front there are a number of confirmed
souvenir hunters, and sometimes their
influence is so potent that an epidemic
crave for collecting spreads through
all ranks, and the main topic of con-
versation is souvenirs in all their va-
rieties.

In every walk of trench life one meets the man with strong acquisitive habits. In civilian life he might develop his bent into either finance, art, stamp-collecting or possibly burglary. In the trenches the fully developed passion for collecting souvenirs is often a trial for the collector, for a collection of any kind sooner or later demands a place to put it in, and there is no place in knapsack and dugout life for a store of gathered treasures.

The available war souvenirs are seldom of much value, but there is a considerable variety of things to choose from in most battle areas. In the early days of the war, the German helmets were valued souvenirs, for the old-style German helmet was substantial and picturesque, brilliant with heavy metal garniture. There were also unusual variations, like the quaint Bavarian shakos, while one or two cavalry regiments provided a rare variety of headgear which has not been seen on the western front since the first year of war.

The German helmet of today has depreciated even more than the German mark. It is no longer even leather, but a kind of light paper-felt. The metal spike has given place to one of wood or composition. The solid brass regimental badge is now a thin metal plaque. The true collector cares very little for the modern helmet and has no interest at all in the little round convict cap which so many German prisoners wear. If the German only knew it, a sure passport to warm and instant favor on surrender is a decent helmet. It attracts immediate attention and the fortunate owner is given cigarettes and other marks of favor by his delighted captor, instead of being merely herded to the rear without ceremony.

The supply of helmets is seldom adequate to the demand; indeed the market is only glutted on occasions of a big push or a large scale raid. Among lesser trophies, the ambitious collector finds great scope for his activities in the shells sent over by the hostile battery. Fuses and nose caps in wonderful variation are to be obtained with little pains, and the collection of these is encouraged by the general staff, because the setting of the fuse may give the correct range of a suspected battery, and these is other information of useful character to be gained from the study of these trophies.

The French soldiers have specialized in aluminum rings and jewelry made from the used caps of hostile shells, and quite an ambitious industry has been

developed in this way. The British prefer to work in brass, usually the brass of empty cartridges and shell cases. With infinite patience and few tools they produce what the Frenchman calls "peculiar objects of the mantelpiece." Little model coal scuttles with legs made of bullets, a tiny shovel worked up from a German rifle cartridge, vases of curious surface mottling made by indenting the brass of a field-gun case; ambitious designs of allied flags and well known heroes, made from ration cases or brass—these are only a few of the things which the collector is offered by his own comrades. There is no end to the ingenuity and variety of the work of the soldier craftsman, but his most familiar work is in inkpots, candlesticks and decorative paper weights made from hand grenades or the interior of shrapnel shells.

MID-WEST RED CROSS DRIVE TO PASS MARK

Chicago, Dec. 21.—Reports to Red Cross headquarters today indicated that the central division will enroll more than its quota in the Christmas membership drive. Returns indicate that Des Moines, Detroit, Springfield, Madison, Milwaukee and other large cities in this division will enroll 20 per cent more than their allotments while Chicago, with a quota of 500,000 already has signed up more than 510,000 members. Reinbeck, Iowa, has enrolled every one of its 1,357 inhabitants.

GERMANY WILL HAVE BUREAU FOR "PEACE"

Amsterdam, Dec. 21.—A German government bureau for studying questions relating to "peace" has been opened in Berlin. Dr. Karl Helfferich, former vice chancellor, is at the head of the bureau with Privy Councillor Albert, the former commissioner to the Panama Pacific exposition, as his assistant.

START FEMINE FAD.

London.—Girl workers in the danger buildings at Woolwich arsenal are not allowed to wear jewelry. They have therefore hit on the idea of wearing colored shoe laces.

The cap shop girls appeared one morning with bright emerald green ribbons on their shoes much to the envy of other departments. The next morning the whole factory was in the fashion, says Dr. A. K. Foxwell, the principal supervisor.

Shoes were tied with blue, pink, red, white ribbons; with anything but the government best lace of unstained leather. The fashion spread to the office and women clerks paraded the platform during the dinner hour with resplendent shoe laces.

All the news all the time—The Argus

IT'S UP TO YOU

We leave it to your own good judgment if Indian River Farms at Vero, Florida, where the growing season lasts through the year, does not offer more opportunity for profitable farming, cattle, hog and poultry raising, as well as a box and pleasant life, than a country which is frozen up half the year. Indian River Farms Company, 409 Putnam street, Davenport, Iowa.

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That are suitable for every member of the family. We have the largest assortment of home made candies in bulk at prices ranging from 15c per pound and up; also in fancy attractive packages from 25c each up to \$10.

We handle the best known brands such as

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Beich's, Lowney's
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Opposite Harper House

All The News All The Time—The Argus

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Even Though They Do Not Have the Ready Money to Pay Cash

You Can Clothe Your Entire Family at Our Store on Small Weekly or Monthly Payments

You do not pay one penny more when taking advantage of our EASY PAYMENT PLAN than when you pay cash. The many thousand customers we have served here for the last five years will testify to this fact. The large quantity of clothing purchased for our large chain of stores, located throughout the entire country makes it possible for us to buy much cheaper than the individual stores. This answers your question of how we can sell on time at the same or a little lower price than cash stores.

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DAVENPORT, IOWA.

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